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ABSTRACT

Progress made in the field of early childhood development during the past decade is examined to provide the background and rationale for tree programs funded by the National Institute of Education (NIE) in 1974: a parenting information center, a multimedia child care training package, and television spots related to child rearing principles. The evaluation consisted of four phases: (1) interviews of 11 nationally-recognized experts in child development who identified problems in research and development, (2) a literature search to identify research findings, demonstration projects, position papers, and books in early childhood education, (3) a one-day conference of regional and state agencies to discuss delivery systems and product content, and (4) interviews of trainers of parents and paraprofessionals who identified successful and unsuccessful practices involved in working with low-income families. Each of these phases is described in detail. Also included is information concerning the progress of the three programs funded by NIE. (BRT)

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Early Childhood Program
Summary of Context Analysis Phase

PS 008148

May 1975

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory

SUMMARY OF CONTEXT ANALYSIS PHASE

Early Childhood Program

The Southwest Educational Development Laboratory
Austin, Texas
May 1975

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This document is a summary of the Context Analysis conducted by the Early Childhood Program of the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, from April through December 1973. The Context Analysis phase was initiated under the direction of Dr. Shari Nedler, now with the University of Colorado at Denver. Interviews conducted by Dr. Dorothy Fruchter of the Educational Development Corporation of Austin, Texas, also contributed to the study. The following Early Childhood Staff members participated:

Joyce Coleman	Judy Melvin
Caroleta Oliveros	Beth Driver
Dianne Wilson	Yvonne Newman

Appreciation is extended to Martha Hartzog who assumed major responsibility for preparation of this summary document. Appreciation also goes to all other Early Childhood staff members who assisted in its preparation, as well as in the earlier Context Analysis phase and subsequent reports.

Joyce Evans
Acting Director
Early Childhood Program

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BACKGROUND

CONTEXT ANALYSIS SUMMARY

This document is a summary of the Context Analysis phase conducted by the Early Childhood Program of the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) from April through December 1973.* This Context Analysis study provided the background and rationale for three work units funded by the National Institute of Education in 1974 (Contract #NE-C-00-0090). These work units and their objectives are as follows:

Work Unit I. Parenting Materials Information Center Model

> Objective: To design, develop, and research the effectiveness of a Parenting Center Model for disseminating information about materials dealing with parenting skills and concerns.

Work Unit II. Multimedia Training Packages for Low-Income Parents and Paraprofessionals

> Objective: To develop and research the effectiveness of multimedia training packages in both Spanish and English for low-income parents and paraprofessionals for increasing knowledge and skills in child care.

Work Unit III. Television Spots on Child-Rearing Principles

> Objective: To design, produce, and research the effectiveness of a set of television spots which provide information for low-income parents on child-rearing principles.

SEDL follows a six-stage Development Process Approach (SEDL, 1970) in the development of all its products. The stages are: context analysis, conceptual design, product design, pilot test, field test, and marketing and diffusion.

*The Context Analysis phase resulted in four documents: A Context Analysis (April, 1973); an Addendum Resource Allocation and Management Plan (May 15, 1973); a second Addendum (June 28, 1973); and a Revised Resource Allocation and Management Plan (December 17, 1973).

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1) Context analysis seeks to define an educational problem, establish its parameters, consider alternative solutions, and identify what appears to be the best strategy for solving the problem.

2) Conceptual design provides a model for implementation of the selected strategy.

3) Product design develops a workable product which is sufficiently complete and capable of limited testing with the target group.

4) Pilot test involves installation of the prototype product in a small number of sites in order to gather feedback from users and observers to use in product revision.

5) Field test is the large-scale comparative testing of a refined instructional product which seeks to determine the ultimate utility and viability of the product.

6) Marketing and diffusion, the final developmental stage, involves planning and implementing a strategy for widespread product dissemination.

SEDL's evaluation activities are designed and conducted in a sequence which parallels the development process. The aim of the evaluation activities is to obtain and provide useful information for making decisions related to revision at all stages of development. Early in the development, evaluation activities focus on product design and improvement (formative evaluation); later they focus on product viability in a competitive market (summative evaluation).

SEDL's development process is not a series of discrete independent stages, for in practice there is considerable overlap between stages. Planning for marketing and diffusion, for example, can begin as early as product design, the third stage. In the same sense, formative and summative evaluation activities overlap, and no discrete boundaries exist between the two.

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The background and rationale for the Early Childhood Program were developed from April through December 1973, during a context analysis stage. This represents the first stage of SEDL's development process. By definition, a context analysis stage

> ". . . is concerned with performing analysis and providing information on the problem under consideration. The objectives of Context Analysis are to define the problem, to establish its parameters, to consider possible solutions to the problem, and to identify the strategy or general approach which appears to be the best" (SEDL: A Development Process, 1970).

The objectives of this context analysis were to review progress made in the field of early childhood development over the past decade, to identify areas of existing needs, and to determine which of these areas would be most appropriate for future program development efforts. The study consisted of four phases, each distinct from one another, yet relating and contributing to the total effort.

In the first phase eleven nationally-recognized experts identified problems which should be addressed through research and development efforts; in the second phase a literature search examined research findings, development efforts, demonstration projects, position papers, and books in the area of early childhood; regional and state agencies discussed potential delivery systems, product content, and format for the third phase; during the final phase, trainers of parents and paraprofessionals focused on successful and unsuccessful practices involved in working with adults in low-income levels.

The context analysis study revealed: 1) that many early childhood programs and materials exist but that there are gaps and weaknesses in them; 2) that the programs are designed for children rather than for adults who interact with children; and 3) that strategies for reaching these adults have not been researched.

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Specific weaknesses and gaps identified by the context analysis included the following:

- Lack of validated materials for training parents and other carepersons to be effective in interacting with and meeting the needs of all young children;
- Lack of definitive research in parent and careperson effectiveness;
- Lack of research in methodology for creating awareness in adults of the interaction skills necessary in child-caring roles;
- Lack of progress in early childhood education and development, despite the programs which have been initiated, for either general application or for use with specific minority groups;
- Lack of incorporation of research findings into validated exportable and replicable products designed to bring about positive change in the knowledge, attitudes, and behavior of the target audience;
- Lack of definitive research regarding effective dissemination strategies;
- Lack of appropriate diagnostic instruments suitable for screening cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development of the young child.

The context analysis study revealed many disagreements, but it also identified common agreements on the following needs for:

- Alternate presentation modes for the several user groups, with each mode involving the most effective communications media;
- Access to materials already developed, whether validated or not;
- Directing efforts toward a single careperson, an efficient and economical approach, since one careperson can influence many children;
- A systems approach in planning and designing a parenting program.

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Materials and program ideas for use in training parents and carepersons are available, but are generally scattered, unvalidated, and unreplicated. Further, evidence suggests that supportive behavior by a valued person, such as a mother, is highly correlated with cognitive development (Pickarts and Fargo, 1971); however, no systematic attempt has been made to build upon this evidence, and little attempt has been made to use modern technology for wide application of successful strategies.

Statement of the Problem

In combination, these deficiencies and needs present one overriding problem: parents, carepersons, and other adults involved in performing services for children need more knowledge and skill in child care.

Solution Strategies

SEDL proposes to attack the problem by developing and researching the effectiveness of (1) an exportable replicable Parenting Materials Information Center, (2) Multimedia Training Packages for Paraprofessionals and Low-income Parents, and (3) Television Spots which build parents' awareness of basic child-rearing principles.

Justification

Three circumstances justify the development and research of the solution strategies which SEDL proposes: its institutional capabilities, the national audience potential for each strategy, and the possibility of impact through existing statewide networks, such as the Office of Child Development and Regional Service Centers.

SEDL has unique institutional capabilities which can support these development and research efforts. These include a sound development process,

distinctive staff capabilities, a broad base of experience and well-designed facilities.

SEDL's development process provides a systematic framework for designing, testing, and validating exportable, replicable educational products.

The multi-ethnic staff has expertise in:

- Conducting educational research and evaluation
- Developing materials and activities using a development process
- Addressing the problems of children of low-income families
- Producing and testing the full range of commercial quality multimedia (videotapes, filmstrips, audiotapes, films, etc.)
- Producing and engineering television programs of commercial broadcast quality

The broad-based experience of the institution includes:

- Four years of programming Los Niños, a weekly 20-minute bilingual television program for preschool children
- One year of developing videotape teaching modules for the Educational Technology Project of the Federation of Rocky Mountain States
- Six years of developing a comprehensive Bilingual Early Childhood Program
- Six years of establishing and working with a multi-state network of test sites throughout the nation.

SEDL's facilities provide space and equipment capability for

- Commercial quality multimedia productions, including graphics, photography, and typecomposition
- Commercial quality color television productions
- Computer analysis (IBM Systems/3)

The audience potential for all three solutions strategies is significant. The Parenting Center will serve community needs related to parents of young children. It can also be used by carepersons and paraprofessionals. Multimedia

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training packages will serve paraprofessionals and low-income parents. The television spots will serve all adults who interact with or care for children. Thus the potential audiences include heads of families with children under six years of age, heads of low-income families, paraprofessionals, and trainers of adults who work with children. In 1970, the U.S. Census Bureau registered 38,582,609 families with children below the age of six; of these, 5,462,216 families were identified as below poverty level: among these families were 1,450,416 Negroes, 415,112 with Spanish background, and 3,921,512 Anglos (General Population Characteristics, 1971).

Data on the total number of paraprofessionals who currently work with children in private, public, and community schools and projects are not available, but it may be assumed that many of the 38,582,609 children are supervised daily in settings outside their home.

The possibility exists for immediate statewide impact of SEDL's strategies. The Office of Early Childhood Development of the Texas Department of Community Affairs plans with and coordinates efforts of all state agencies which serve the needs of children and their parents. This agency has committed itself to using the three proposed strategies throughout the State of Texas. Ten other states with similar offices offer the same possibility.

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PHASE I

PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

PHASE I

The first phase of the context analysis conducted by SEDL from January to April, 1973, consisted of a series of personal interviews with eleven recognized substantive experts in the field of Early Childhood Education. These interviews were conducted by the Educational Development Corporation of Austin, Texas, under the direction of Dorothy Fruchter, president. The eleven experts interviewed were:

Carl Bereiter	Ontario Institute of Education Toronto, Ontario CANADA
Urie Bronfenbrenner	Department of Human Development and Family Studies New York State College of Human Ecology Cornell University Ithaca, N. Y.
Bettye Caldwell	Center for Early Childhood Education and Development University of Arkansas Little Rock, Arkansas
Ira Gordon	Department of Education University of Florida Gainsville, Florida
Edith Grotberg	Office of Child Development Washington, D. C.
Lilian Katz	Director, ERIC Clearinghouse on Early Childhood Education Urbana, Illinois
James Miller	Professor of Education Studies and Director of Division Emory University Atlanta, Georgia
Richard Orton	Associate Director, Office of Early Childhood Development Texas Department of Community Affairs Austin, Texas

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Ronald Parker	Center for Advanced Study in Education Central University of New York (CUNY) New York, N. Y.
Jeannette Watson	Director, Office of Early Childhood Development Texas Department of Community Affairs Austin, Texas
Edward Zigler	Department of Psychology Yale University New Haven, Connecticut

Each of the interviews was structured according to the following list of nineteen questions in five areas:

Theories of Early Childhood Development and Education

1. Is there a theoretical position regarding early childhood growth and development that you find especially valuable?

2. Is there a theoretical position regarding early childhood education that you find especially valuable?

3. What early childhood research, within the last decade, do you feel is particularly meaningful and stimulating?

4. What important problems in early childhood development or education have been relatively neglected as far as research is concerned?

Current States of the Field

5. What should be the focus in planning and delivering early childhood education?

6. Where is the "action" in this field?

7. Do you see changes in consumer populations in the next decade?

8. Are there existing programs you feel have had promising results and should be expanded?

Key Tasks for Children and Adults

9. Are there identifiable essential childhood developmental tasks that apply across ethnic and cultural lines?

10. Are there suitable measurement techniques for such tasks?

11. Are there any universals in parenting or caretaker skills?

12. Could these be taught? If so, how?

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The Future of Early Childhood Education

13. What are your hopes for "early childhood education of the future?"

14. How would you see these hopes realistically applied?

15. What part could the larger social institutions play?

What SEDL Could Contribute

16. Specifically, how could the expertise of an educational laboratory, oriented toward products in curriculum development, media use, packaging, and marketing, be applied to best advantage in the area of early childhood?

17. What kinds of products could have the most impact?

18. Who would be the consumers?

19. How might such products be disseminated?

The responses to the questions revealed an important major area of consensus: that future efforts should focus on increasing the skills of parents, carepersons, and other adults who are significant in the child's life. Creating an optimal environment for the development of young children requires adults who are skilled in responding to the children's emotional, social, physical, and intellectual needs. The following summarizes the experts' responses to the questions, along with SEDL's responses:

Theories of Early Childhood Development and Education

The educators varied in their theoretical position regarding early childhood growth and development and early childhood education: some saw the most valuable approach to be in behaviorism and developmental psychology. Others took a neo-Piagetian approach; and others an ecological approach, stressing the importance of the family and the community, and rejecting the isolation of

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children's cognitive development. One expert in particular said he considered all current development theory to be primitive and basically useless.

There was little agreement among the experts on the value of recent research. Some believed most of it trivial or poorly done; others were impressed with current developmental research, with the work being done on development of awareness and on developmental sequences over time. Others were impressed with the semi-laboratory approach of looking at parents and children in a structured relationship: field intervention research, survey research using correlation methods, and efforts to measure Piagetian tasks. There was also approval of the work being done on human ecology and external systems, as well as Bronfenbrenner's work and Kagan's Guatemalan study. Finally, some of the experts approved work on noncognitive factors and parental intervention, and work with total families. Current research on impulsivity was also mentioned. The response of SEDL can be seen in its three work units.

While the eleven experts agreed that important problems in early childhood development or education were being neglected in current research, they did not agree on what these problems were. Primary areas of concern included the following:

Instrumentation

Longitudinal and affective research

Noncognitive areas and affective areas

Mental and educational development

Status of women and the world of work

Truly supportive environments and environments that would make families effective

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The question of the child in the context of the home and the community

The development of the "other concept" as opposed to the "self-concept"

Moral decisions on an internal ethic for early childhood education

Evaluation of the successes and failures of day care

Cost-effectiveness analyses of day care

The need to examine differences among subcultures to determine which are caused by ethnicity, which by poverty, and which by other external factors

The response of SEDL is found in the three work units: the Parenting Materials Information Center, the Multimedia Training Packages, and the Television Spots. Specifically it can be seen in the areas of instrumentation, research dealing with noncognitive and cognitive areas, the creation of environments that would make families effective, the development of supportive environments, mental and educational development, and differences among subcultures.

Current States of the Field

The experts favored several different focuses for planning and delivering early childhood education: parenting and caregiving skills, the whole child and his environment, specific needs of children, coordination in children's services, neighborhood day care and social alternatives to current full workdays for mothers, developing a State Plan, and goals for the development of educational products which stress freedom within limits.

In its three work units SEDL has developed products designed for parents and carepersons of young children. It has also designed a Parenting Information Materials Center to systematically disseminate information through various networks to the target population.

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In response to "Where is the action?" several of the experts stressed parenting skills; others were interested in a state-wide system. One suggested research or demonstration projects with businesses, communities, and families. The semi-laboratory approach was touted as well. Early advocacy was also brought up as important, with a caution that programs should not be simply family-based. Also mentioned was the creation of less costly forms of day care and early childhood education.

Although most of the educators did not think the consumer population would change much in the next decade, most who answered this question thought that future efforts should be directed toward adults rather than children. Parents and expectant parents were emphasized as prime consumers. In its three work units SEDL has developed products directed at parents and other carepersons.

Again the experts failed to agree on whether or not any existing programs were promising and should be expanded. Several of the experts found none of them promising and one expert especially was dissatisfied with the trend toward family-based programs. Others favored current efforts in parenting and caretaking skills: specifically mentioned were the Rocky Mountain States Satellite Television Program, SEDL's video facilities, and the Bereiter-Englemann system. Other educators favored programs that concentrated on adults rather than children. SEDL's three work units focus on the most promising strategies mentioned by the experts.

Key Tasks for Children and Adults

In the main, the group responded positively to whether or not there are identifiable essential childhood developmental tasks that apply across ethnic

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and cultural lines. Havighurst's and Erikson's listings of the tasks were mentioned. One expert felt that the tasks all involve the child's using adults as models; another stressed school-related behaviors; while another mentioned that developers need to distinguish between those behaviors which will be learned only with intervention and those which the child learns without intervention. SEDL feels that additional longitudinal research is still needed in this area and that additional information will accrue as part of the feedback data gathered by the three work units.

None of the experts responded positively to the question about whether there are suitable measurement techniques for such tasks. One felt that the major need was to assess noncognitive tasks, while another mentioned work currently being done on the measurement of trust.

The experts were in almost complete agreement that there are universals in parenting or caretaker skills, but they did not name many specifics. One of the experts was in the process of identifying such universals for the International Education Association; another expert stressed individualization and agreed with a colleague on the panel about the importance of sensitivity to individual needs. The British Infant School was mentioned. One expert particularly favored short periods of intense adult-child interaction. Research focusing on the collection and analysis of specific information related to universals in parenting or caretaking skills is built into SEDL's three work units.

The responding group also agreed that such universals in parenting or caretaker skills could be taught; however, there was slight disagreement concerning how they could be taught and to whom. Five of the experts favored

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television instruction for everyone from "informal caregivers" (parents, grandparents, babysitters) to day care teachers. One mentioned the current experiment of "putting parenting skills on cereal boxes." Two experts thought that it would be useful for field trainers to work with day care people, and that staff training centers should be a part of a child care network. It was also felt that parenting skills should be taught in high school.

SEDL is researching a number of strategies for teaching parenting and caregiving skills, as part of the multimedia training packages and the television spots. These strategies include written materials, film and video presentations, discussions, role-playing, etc.

The Future of Early Childhood Education

There was little consensus as to the experts' hopes for early childhood education of the future. The following needs were mentioned:

Early screening to determine which option was right for a given child

Early public accessibility

Programs in which teachers themselves would evaluate materials

Dealing with younger and younger children

Emphasis on the caregiver rather than the child

One expert mentioned enrolling children in school at birth or earlier and having parents attend classes on parenting; another saw smaller group situations with "mind-to-mind," "meaning-to-meaning" contacts; another thought that early childhood education would not affect children younger than four years. One saw the State Plan as the wave of the future, while another saw possibilities in neighborhood family centers with cross-age activities. Finally, it was thought that in the face of the changing status of women, industry would provide the major impetus for public early childhood education.

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SEDL has incorporated the following into the three work units: a focus on young children, an emphasis on the caregiver, parenting education, products that can be incorporated into a wide variety of settings, and optional strategies for dissemination.

The replies of the experts were varied as to how these hopes for early childhood education of the future should be realistically applied. Early screening, the necessity of achievement goals, and the need for models and programs that are affordable and easy to disseminate were mentioned. One expert foresaw a combined early childhood education/day care effort; another thought cooperation among parents, the community, and business would be necessary. It was felt that the State Plan could best be implemented by examining the individual needs of counties. The creation of good cognitive, physical, and affective learning materials in Spanish as well as English was favored. Smaller populations, community schools, and day care extended to older school children after hours were also proposed. One educator thought unions and similar collective bargaining institutions could bring about future programs. Finally, Bob Phillips's educational technology funds were mentioned.

SEDL's three work units incorporate products designed with cost-effectiveness criteria; tested dissemination strategies; cognitive, physical, and affective materials in Spanish as well as in English; and utilization of various technological approaches.

As to the role the larger social institutions could play, two of the experts thought that such institutions could provide State funding. One felt that schools could serve as loci for family activities, while another thought that schools should be supportive, logistic, arranging entities. All-day care and after-hours care for older children of working parents were mentioned.

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It was felt that larger institutions could provide either public or industry-specific preschools. Medical professionals could screen children early to determine which kind of day care could best serve each child. One expert mentioned that it will be ambitious young women who want to work, rather than the poor who will increase the need for day care.

Through each cycle of the development process SEDL applies to the three work units, various strategies for dissemination will be explored and tested. These will include schools, day care centers, industry-specific preschools and other local, state, and regional organizations.

What SEDL Could Contribute

There was more agreement among the experts about how SEDL could apply its expertise to best advantage in the area of early childhood development and education. Eight consultants felt that the specific expertise of institutions like SEDL could best be used in producing audio and visual materials, either for lending libraries or for commercial television. It was also suggested that SEDL could use sophisticated marketing concepts to disseminate materials that have already been developed. For instance, SEDL could disseminate nationally some part of a state system for early childhood education, such as the bilingual program. It was felt that all products should be capable of being used by the entire range of caregivers, and that all products must be professional and appealing to assure that they will be used. All these suggestions are incorporated into SEDL's three work units.

As to what products could have the most impact, televised materials were specifically mentioned, with one expert suggesting that these materials be geared to appeal to commercial networks. Another expert favored cassettes,

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tapes, and day care curriculum materials, all marketed correctly. Kits with ideas for home activities and programmed packages were also favored. The remaining suggestions were more general: the products should be professionally executed; they should be left to "front line" developers; SEDL should concentrate on implementation and marketing; the simplest products, flexible and constructed from appealing materials, were suggested as the most effective.

The work units developed by SEDL specifically include the development of televised materials geared to appeal to commercial networks, as well as the design of video-cassettes and tapes, and printed curriculum materials and products, with ideas for home activities. Effort is being made to develop products that are professionally executed, simple in design, and constructed from appealing materials.

Ten of the eleven educators thought adults would be the principal sumers of these products. Parents, preparents, teachers, and caregivers were mentioned. Only two experts brought up children in response to this question. The buying consumers were seen to be institutions, like libraries and neighborhood centers.

SEDL's three work units are directed primarily toward adults: parents, teachers and other caregivers.

The educators felt that these products could best be disseminated through television, commercial marketing techniques, lending libraries, major publishers, and field trainers. One felt that laboratories should deal with their own dissemination problems. SEDL's work units incorporate a number of the suggestions offered regarding dissemination, including television, commercial marketing techniques, and field trainers.

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PHASE II

LITERATURE SEARCH

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PHASE II

The second phase of the context analysis was a literature search.* Although child-rearing is a significant societal task, few adults in this country have ever received formal training to prepare them for it or to help them carry it out effectively. This applies to all adults who care for children--parents, as well as teachers and other day care personnel. This lack of systematic knowledge about parenting did not lie in any inherent difficulty in producing and disseminating such knowledge, but instead was due to the lack of a solid data base upon which to make prescriptive suggestions. This was because, until relatively recently, the development of social science in this country generally did not include attention to parenting. Not only has there been a lack of formal training for adults, but what knowledge did exist was scattered and not easily accessible.

Historical Overview

Until the mid-fifties, minimal data were available in the area of parenting. The few child-rearing books which were written were read only by a very small portion of the population (mostly college graduates), and these books were based for the most part upon theoretical notions about optimal child development without too much empirical support. Piaget began his work in the 1920's and has continued through the present. This work has produced a great amount of data, containing valuable insights and complex theoretical statements about cognitive development. However, only recently has American education begun to

*In addition to this literature search, three other manuals prepared by SEDL document the literature through 1973 in the areas of parent education, teacher education, and television/film.

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translate Piaget's findings into educational practices and child-rearing applications (Weikart, 1970; Lavatelli, 1970). Similarly, the work of Arnold Gesell and his colleagues (Gesell and Ilg, 1943) focused primarily upon development in physical and psychomotor areas which are largely or totally under the control of physical maturation. These investigators gave less attention to child development in the cognitive and social-personal areas; when they did write in these areas, the effect was to discourage the development of prescriptive child-rearing principles. That is, the heavy maturational bias of Gesell and his colleagues led them to suggest that children go through a series of innately programmed stages regardless of parental behavior. One implication of this position is that, since it holds that child development is largely a matter of the unfolding of innate maturational stages, the role of the careperson should be confined to knowing about and passively watching and reacting to the child's behavior during these stages. This is opposed to the more proactive and causal careperson behavior that is likely to influence a child toward one direction rather than another. Gesell's maturational bias also heavily pervades the books of Benjamin Spock (1968), with the result that although he gives much prescriptive advice in the area of health and physical care of children, he has practically no prescriptive advice on the behaviors of carepersons relative to cognitive or social-emotional development in children. More recent work has shown that the young child is much more malleable and open to parental influence than these writers believed (Mussen, 1970; Hunt, 1961).

The American behaviorist tradition helped break down this heavily maturationist approach to child-rearing. The behaviorists began with a famous experiment by Watson (1919) which demonstrated that the emotional reactions of

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a young child to a white rabbit could be radically altered depending upon the reinforcement applied immediately after presentation of the rabbit. Such work by early behaviorists opened up possibilities for seeing the child as much more responsive to environmental differences than had been believed previously, and therefore much more open to predisposing and molding influences of contrasting child-rearing practices. However, with a few exceptions (particularly Miller and Dollard, 1941), tradition remained concentrated primarily upon theoretical issues and did not begin to turn much attention to applied issues, child-rearing included, until about 25 years later.

To summarize, until about 1955, child-rearing advice was based upon theories which either lacked validity or already were demonstrably incorrect, or upon data which were inappropriate for purposes of giving prescriptive child-rearing advice. Not surprisingly, given these circumstances, "child psychology" developed a bad image in the minds of both psychologists and the public at large. This remains true in the present, at least with the general public, because recent advances in the study of child development and child-rearing have not yet become well known via texts or popular child-rearing books. However, the situation has changed radically in the last twenty years. During the last ten years more than 90% of the data existing on child development and child-rearing has been collected, and a rich data base is now available from which to draw prescriptive implications about child-rearing in the cognitive and social-emotional areas.

Another factor which limited the dissemination of child development and child-rearing information was the lack of contact and communication between the parent and other carepersons and the school. The school represented the "expert" and asked for the parent's participation only when there was a

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problem to solve. Thus, very little parent education on child care practices was being conducted either through the schools or through the publisher's market.

This status was maintained until the early 1960's (Grotberg, 1971; Parent Development, 1973). At that time, a variety of pressures and influences stimulated the campaign to get parents involved in the educational programs of preschool children. Of significant influence was the growing number of publications which emphasized the importance of early experiences upon subsequent cognitive growth and educational achievement (Bloom, 1964; Hess, 1969; Hunt, 1961) and which discussed the specific influence of home and maternal factors in the socialization and cognitive behaviors of young children (Bernstein, 1961; Coleman, 1966; Hess and Shipman, 1967; Gordon, 1969).

Another major impetus for parental involvement came through political pressures at both the local and the national levels. At the local level, advocates of the civil rights movement were very articulate in criticising the public schools, especially in urban areas. A paramount issue in the criticisms was the lack of relationship between the educational experiences being offered by the schools, and the local communities' cultural experiences and needs. Ultimately, people in the communities began to demand community control over educational policy and decision-making in the schools (Grotberg, 1971).

On the national level, the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 heavily emphasized parents as agents of change. The Federal Office of Economic Opportunity programs (like Head Start and Follow-Through) were founded on the theory that there existed a "culture of poverty" which was passed from one generation to another. In effect, this "cycle of poverty" was perpetuated by children modeling the behavior of their poor and powerless parents. Out of

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this philosophy came the belief that the status of the poor could only be changed if they were given the power to help themselves--thus stated in the legislation as "maximum feasible participation" (Parent Development, 1973).

Therefore, in the 1960's a combination of factors effected a change from the traditional: 1) recognition that the family plays an important role in the child's early cognitive development, and 2) political pressures at local and national levels. As a result, major federal programs (like Head Start and Follow-Through) were designed with mandatory components for parent and community participation.

The Present

As a result of the new research findings on child care practices and parental effect on early experiences, and with the funding of new early childhood education/parent involvement programs, books on parenting that are qualitatively different from their predecessors have begun to appear. And the definition of parenting has been expanded to all those who care for children. Volumes such as those by Dodson (1970, 1974) and Gordon (1970) represent the present and probably the future Zeitgeist in this field, approaching parenting as ideally a proactive applied science. Using the presently rich and continually growing data base on the relationships between particular child-rearing practices and particular outcomes in child intelligence and/or social-emotional traits, such authors are able to make prescriptive suggestions about how to raise children. Such works are neither comprehensive nor completely correct at present, but they are a vast and qualitative improvement over their predecessors.

The difference in the available data base for prescriptive advice to parents can be seen by comparing the second and third edition of Carmichael's

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manual of child psychology (Carmichael, 1954; Mussen, 1970). The second edition is almost exclusively concerned with theory and methodology, but the third edition, which is three or four times larger than the second edition, contains voluminous information on the relationships between parent behaviors and child outcomes. In fact, the better part of the second volume of the third edition is devoted to discussions of mostly recent research relating particular parent behaviors to such child outcomes as intelligence, school achievement, achievement motivation, aggression and hostility, affiliation and sociability, sex typing and sex role learning, and self-esteem. It is becoming increasingly clear that such cognitive and affective child traits are partially or predominantly shaped by the people, objects, and events in a child's environment, not by genetically determined innate structures. While the newborn infant is not totally a "blank slate" as early behaviorists thought him to be, ample data exist at present to show that his cognitive development (to some degree) and his social-emotional development (almost completely) are heavily dependent upon the child's formative experiences, especially the attitudes and behavior of his parents.

Thus, although child-rearing is far from being an exact science, a rich and growing data base useful for drawing prescriptive implications about child-rearing is available. Data-based information about training, some borrowed from teacher training programs and some coming directly from parent training programs, is also available. Data are available to provide both content and methods needed to design a rational parent education/training program. These data can also be used to train paraprofessionals. As the importance of parent and paraprofessional training becomes increasingly apparent, more and more early education programs, school systems and other agencies which have

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mostly confined their efforts in the past to working with children, are beginning to develop programs for working with parents as well (Gordon, 1970; Levenstein, 1971; Home-Oriented Preschool Education, 1972; Home Start Demonstration Program, 1973; Forrester, et al., 1971).

It has been found that early childhood programs directed toward children themselves have produced few long-term gains (Stein and Smith, 1973). Perhaps they disrupted the mother-child bond at a critical point (Bronfenbrenner Interview, 1973), or perhaps even the best program cannot make up for a poor home environment (Stein and Smith, 1973). In any case, the current trend is away from child-centered efforts and toward programs for parents and carepersons. Some of this emphasis has come from parent involvement in Head Start and other preschool programs (Regional Conference, 1973). Head Start was generally more successful where there was more parent involvement (Head Start Report, 1971). and Home Start (Home Start Guidelines, 1971), Sesame Mothers' Project (Filep, 1971), and similar efforts are producing positive results.

It is noted that a new structure of caregiving specialists has been formed. The Department of HEW recently announced a new career specialty: the Child Development Associate for work in Head Start programs. This development program is based on competency and not on standard academic degree training. The formation of the CDA group confirms the shortage of persons and skills for day care, nursery schools, and other preschool activities.

Directing efforts toward parents has several advantages. First, it allows the mother* the option of caring for her own child competently (Stein and Smith, 1973). It enables her to give the individual care that is so important

*The term "mother" is used here for the sake of simplicity and euphony, and because most caregivers are women. It should not be inferred that fathers could not perform the same parenting function.

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during the first five years of life (Lichtenberg and Norton, 1972) and helps her modify the child's environment to decrease damaging influences (Heber and Garber, 1970).

Second, parent-centered intervention takes advantage of the strong mother-child bond and the immeasurable value of a supportive home environment (Miller Interview, 1973).

Third, programs directed toward parents enhance parental self-concept in three ways:

1) They let the mother know that her role is important and that it is appreciated by the community (Stein and Smith, 1973);
2) They impart skills which develop competence and promote self-esteem (Stein and Smith, 1973);
3) They affect more than one child.

Programs for carepersons should not be restricted to parents. Day care workers, babysitters, and preparents in high school must all receive similar training (Grotberg and Watson Interviews, 1973). Since mothers of young children will undoubtedly continue to work outside the home, caregiver competence will continue to be an equally important concern.

Over 4,000,000 women with children under six years of age work full time (Pierce, 1971). Financial necessity and the search for individual fulfillment are sending more mothers of young children into the labor force each day. Provisions for caring for these children vary. Some are left with grandparents or older siblings, others with babysitters; others are enrolled in day care centers. Children of the poor may receive federal or state funded early childhood programs, while middle-class children attend private preschools.

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Preschools, Head Start programs, and day care centers incorporate varying degrees of structure and staff development into their programs. Relatives, babysitters, and mothers themselves typically rely on tradition and example. But this haphazard approach is insufficient and often ineffective. Work by Freud, Erickson, Bettleheim, and many others has shown that early experiences are extremely important in terms of both positive and negative effects. Clearly, some form of intervention is needed to reduce the likelihood of future failure (Brademas, et al., 1972) the kind of failure that becomes a habit and a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Early childhood education--at least in systematic form--has usually taken place somewhere outside the home in a chronologically homogeneous setting (Evans, 1971). Intervention has meant taking the child out of his "disadvantaged" environment for several hours a day, and returning him to the same environment after school.

Guidance of cognitive and affective development and proper nutritional and medical care are of little avail, however, without a supportive home environment (Bronfenbrenner Interview, 1973). "The absence of mothering . . . is the single greatest cause of children's stunted development" (Coles and Piers, 1970). Obviously, there is a need for some kind of early childhood intervention that will guide and enhance the child's total development while providing his basic physical needs, teaching the caregiver good child-rearing practices, and freeing his mother to work.

Home Start (Home Start Guidelines, 1971) and similar parent training programs kept the child in the home, but either took the mother to a center for training or brought a trainer to her. Programs requiring the mother to leave home were self-limiting because of practical problems. Where the trainer

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visited the mother in her home, initial resistance and suspicion were difficult to overcome. Parents tended to see trainers as invaders telling them they were bad parents (Stein and Smith, 1973).

The issue of early childhood intervention has been approached in many ways. Books, magazine articles, and college course advise well-educated parents who are motivated enough to use them. Preschool programs such as Head Start combine some schooling with nutritional and medical care, but have few long-range effects (Head Start Report, 1971). Private nurseries range from mere caregiving to Montessori methods, but are beyond the reach of the poor. The Bereiter-Englemann project uses drills and reinforcement, but children are not taught to explore or to ask meaningful questions. Home Start and similar parent training programs have the previously mentioned disadvantages. State plans are considered by some (Watson Interview, 1973; Regional Conference, 1973) to be the answer, but their effectiveness has not been determined.

Some attempt is being made to reach children and carepersons, including parents and paraprofessionals, through television, the medium currently most appealing and highest in impact. Sesame Street, Los Niños, Mister Roger's Neighborhood, and the parenting series being developed by Fred Rogers are all being made available. However, they appear on public television rather than national networks and hence fail to reach many of the people who need them most. Furthermore, Fred Rogers' series is a documentary, and this format typically requires considerable motivation on the part of the viewer.

Finally, to the extent that innovative, useful and truly educational activities are not planned, there is a clear tendency on the part of many school personnel to define "parent participation" as "parent use." In general, this practice occurs by involving parents in all those activities which do not

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require skills, which are repetitive, and which consume the teacher's valuable time in "non-professional" activities. In this way, parents are used as free, unskilled, and unrecognized labor and are in short turned off from real, educational, growth-fostering types of participation.

In summary, the review of the literature shows that although many helpful materials exist to assist adults in taking care of children, these materials are scattered and often inaccessible to those who need them the most. Furthermore, training materials for parents and paraprofessional teachers have traditionally depended upon the written word, which has often rendered them inaccessible to the target audience. Thus there are two overriding needs: 1) to collect information on parenting and make it generally available, and 2) to provide a comprehensive multimedia training program for parents and paraprofessionals which does not depend upon the written word.

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PHASE III

REGIONAL CONFERENCE

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PHASE III

A third phase of the context analysis was a one-day regional conference held in Austin in March, 1973. It examined regional needs related to early childhood development. Participants were:

Carolyn Carroll	Program Designer Office of Early Childhood Development State of Texas
David Chapa	Program Supervisor Regional Office of Economic Opportunity
Joe Frost	Department of Curriculum and Instruction The University of Texas at Austin
Barry Klein	Region XIII Early Childhood Specialist State of Texas
Allee Mitchell	Training Officer Texas Southern University
Richard Orton	Associate Director Office of Early Childhood Development State of Texas
Carmen Peña	3-4-5 Project University of Houston
Mabel Pitts	Adult Education Department of Public Welfare State of Texas
Lucille Rochs	Training Officer San Antonio College
Frances Vargas	Early Childhood Program Austin Independent School District
Libby Vernon	Elementary Education Consultant Texas Education Agency
Joan Williams	Special Education-Plan A Texas Education Agency
Richard Ybarra	Region XVII Early Childhood Programs State of Texas

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Goals of the conference were to confirm and analyze products, process, content, form, and media needs that are not being met in early childhood education at this time. The recommendations made at the conference can be summarized as follows:

Client/Consumer; Product Form

There was complete consensus that the primary and immediate target population for early childhood education and development should be adults who function in various caretaker roles-- parents, teachers, baby sitters, and all others involved in the care of young children. This recommendation confirmed the findings of the interview and literature review phases of the context analysis.

The conference participants identified an additional concern-- the needs of carepersons who in the future will be working with handicapped children. Recent legislative mandates at both the Federal and State levels require that 10 percent of all Headstart enrollees be children who have been identified as handicapped. Carepersons working with these children are in desperate need of instructional materials for use in the classroom as well as training programs that would make them more effective in meeting the affective and cognitive needs of the children and their parents.

Recommendations regarding product form included a broad range of flexible materials for carepersons that would allow greater selectivity based on a larger number of usable alternatives; provisions for personalization and individualization of materials designed and tested for different social, cultural, and economic levels; and economic considerations for the design of materials that could be afforded by the target group.

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Product Content

An overriding concern was that product content be communicated clearly and simply. The need for improved instrumentation, measurement, screening, and progress determination was also expressed. A unanimous recommendation was made for content in the affective area for carepersons working with young children.

Product Media; Types of Presentation

Product presentation should rely heavily on visual methodology; it should be simple as well as easy to obtain, store, and retrieve. Research related to comparisons of various presentation formats was recommended. This should include the variables of home visits, small group discussions, reading of materials, audio-visual presentations, large group discussions, and master teacher presentations. Research related to development of products in the right language and cultural form was also recommended.

Dissemination Patterns; Delivery Systems

Recommendations were made concerning the need for a central clearinghouse that could coordinate the dissemination of available information. All of the organizations represented at the conference expressed a committment to participate in the testing of the proposed products and in future dissemination efforts.

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PHASE IV

TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS

PHASE IV

The final phase of the context analysis consisted of a series of telephone interviews with substantive early childhood experts currently working in the area of research and development for carepersons. Participants were:

Dell Felder	Houston Independent School District Houston, Texas
Walter Hodges	Georgia State University Atlanta, Georgia
Jenny Klein	Office of Child Development Washington, D.C.
Ron Lally	Syracuse University Syracuse, New York
Phyllis Levenstein	Mother-Child Home Program Demonstration Center Freeport, New York
Jean McCarthy	National Leadership Training Institute University of Arizona Tucson, Arizona
Ann O'Keefe	Director, Home Start Program Office of Child Development Washington, D.C.
Florence Segluin	Home Start Program Office of Child Development Washington, D.C.
Burton White	Graduate School of Education Harvard University Cambridge, Massachusetts
Ray Williams	Director, Child Development Associate Consortium University of Maryland College Park, Maryland

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The experts were asked the following questions:

1. Do you agree that training for carepersons is important?
2. What kind of training needs do you see as critical? Which ones are not sufficiently addressed? How can they be addressed effectively?
3. What would be the most appropriate mode of delivery for training materials (television, simulation games, written or pictured materials, combinations)?

All of those interviewed agreed that training for carepersons was of prime importance. The ten experts' suggestions included developing the following:

1. A series of small booklets (simply written and illustrated, and expounding a single concept) that a careperson could pick up and read in a short period of time.
2. Filmed or videotaped samples of positive behavior, produced in a natural setting, and accompanied by a discussion of alternative behavior patterns.
3. Materials that would convince parents of their self-worth and develop their confidence in their own capabilities.
4. A presentation of interaction techniques that are fundamentally important in fostering both affective and cognitive development.
5. Demonstrations of several appropriate ways of handling specific behavioral situations, taking into consideration different techniques and styles.

Finally, the experts recommended that the training materials focus on a core of skills, with specialized units available particularly for the handicapped child.

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CONCLUSIONS

CONCLUSIONS

Each phase of the context analysis study identified research and product needs in the area of early childhood. The following summarizes the general conclusions which emerged.

A number of discrepancies exist in the general area of early childhood education and development. Despite the many programs which have been initiated for general application or for use with specific minority groups, actual progress has been insufficient. While many causes for these deficiencies have been suggested, there has been little agreement about which causes are the most important or which needs represented are the most widespread. Principal reasons cited include the greater number of working mothers; the high incidence of fathers too busy working to spend time with their children; changes in national morality, technology, and economics; increase in the divorce rate; a general permissiveness in child-rearing; and lack of educational programs directed at parenting.

There was general agreement that the greatest need at the present time is for the education of parents, paraprofessionals, and other adults involved in caring for children. The inability of carepersons to perform child services effectively or adequately usually is caused by lack of specific training for this role. An additional need relates to the development of instructional materials for the preschool handicapped child and training materials for carepersons who work with this target group.

There was also general agreement that the portion of the early childhood development process that appears weakest relates to screening, measurement, diagnosis, and evaluation. This means that any program developed at this time will have to proceed with inadequate measurement tools.

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There was substantial agreement that a systems approach in planning and design should be used to improve parenting and caregiving services. That is, research and development efforts should be focused on designing alternate presentation modes for the several user groups, with each mode involving the most effective communications media in modular design in order to make available numerous possible variations in format. Also, research should be implemented to determine the format for materials appropriate to the varied intellectual sophistication of the audience.

The Southwest Educational Development Laboratory is a logical agency to fill a number of the expressed needs. The Laboratory is judged to have the skills to develop needed materials and processes, and it has already acquired the background, experience, and incentive essential for developing a satisfactory solution.

Therefore, the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory is in the process of:

1. Implementing the necessary research, developing the needed materials, forming the necessary packages and alternative packaging systems, and designing and organizing a delivery system for appropriate materials to reach parents, caregivers, and other adults involved in early childhood education and development.
2. Designing at least some of these materials to help a broad range of caregivers gain both effectiveness and increased feelings of competence in a core of skills applicable to most early childhood settings. Other packages are addressing skills important for carepersons in specific settings, such as day care centers, homes, or nursery schools.

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3. Stressing a flexible and positive approach, by providing multiple options for the caregiver and offering techniques for individualized treatment of young children.
4. Involving a creative mix of media, emphasizing not only impact and effectiveness of presentation, but also sturdiness and simplicity. Demonstrations and pictures are being stressed; written material is being de-emphasized. Marketability and attractiveness is being built into the training packages to make dissemination easier.
5. Considering a joint undertaking with a State agency or other existing agencies, particularly those that are widely-known, highly influential, and expert in delivery. Such arrangement will provide appropriate field test sites for a model which, after evaluation and modification, might be made available nationally.

Implications for Program Development

The conclusions of the context analysis study have been examined within the framework of the capabilities of SEDL as a research and development institution. The study clearly identified critical needs that must be addressed. The unique strengths of SEDL that can support future product development efforts in the areas identified are:

1. A staff of trained substantive early childhood personnel who have participated in the development of the Bilingual Early Childhood Program.
2. A development process with specified stages and criteria that provides a systematic framework for design, testing, and validation of exportable, replicable products.

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3. An evaluation support division with demonstrated expertise in research and development.
4. Multimedia development expertise which includes production, testing, and validation of filmstrips, videotapes, and films.
5. Extensive television production experience gained through four years of programming Los Niños, a 20-minute bilingual television program for preschool children, and development of videotape teaching modules for the Educational Technology Project of the Federation of Rocky Mountain States.
6. A facility with in-house capabilities for production of video and film products.
7. Demonstrated ability to work with a multi-state network of test sites throughout the nation.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the context analysis study and an examination of SEDL's unique capabilities, the Early Childhood Program is proposing that future educational research and development efforts be directed toward resolving the more critical portions of the broad problem concerns identified through the four phases of the study. These problem concerns are:

1. Lack of definitive research regarding effective dissemination strategies.
2. Lack of validated materials for training parents and other carepersons to be effective in interacting with and meeting the needs of all young children.
3. Lack of definitive research in specific areas of early childhood

education and development such as cognitive and affective development, parent and careperson effectiveness, and instrumentation development.

4. Lack of appropriate diagnostic instruments suitable for screening cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development of the young child.
5. Incorporation of research findings into validated products designed to bring about positive change in the knowledge, attitudes, and behavior of the target audience.

SEDL's intent at this time is to implement research and development efforts that respond to the specific concerns defined within the scope of the identified problem. SEDL's responses include:

1. Parenting Materials Information Center (PMIC) that gathers together all of the significant materials related to parenting and careperson training, that have been developed through research and development. These materials are being catalogued and evaluated according to pre-specified criteria designed to assess their usefulness for persons working with these target populations. Review of the literature and interviews with substantive experts indicate that, while a variety of materials have already been developed, they are not easily accessible and there has been no assessment of their appropriateness for general use. SEDL is gathering and organizing these materials to make them accessible to users for review; is preparing a series of annotated bibliographies that could be distributed to both professional and lay groups; and is developing and conducting training workshops to disseminate information regarding available programs. Research implications being studied include determining the growth and changes in parent and careperson behavior when such materials are made

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available to them. Data related to the effectiveness of the Training Workshop Model and other various dissemination strategies is being collected and analyzed, and is resulting in definitive recommendations regarding strategies for dissemination.

2. A series of individualized booklets which focus on specific parenting and careperson skills. These booklets are being designed and tested with carepersons who work with groups of children as well as with parents of young children. A series of videotapes that provide audio-visual demonstrations of these skills are also being designed and tested for use with the printed materials. Sample topics include the use of learning materials at home and at school, arranging space for the young child's development, reading stories to young children, expressive activities for the young child, and stimulating language development through daily routines. Versions of the booklets and videotapes are being prepared in both Spanish and English. Research questions focus on evaluating the most effective combinations of communication modes for specific sub-samples of the target population, i.e. visual, audio-visual, SES, language of presentation, ethnicity, and educational background. The evaluation design also includes measurement of change in knowledge, attitudes, and behavior of parents and other carepersons.

3. Television spots that present basic child-rearing principles and create an awareness of the critical importance of parenting. The exemplary media division in SEDL's facility provides the Laboratory with the most up-to-date equipment for television and film production. Follow-up information to the televised messages is being provided

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through annotated materials developed in conjunction with PMIC. Efforts are being made through the Texas State Office of Early Childhood Development, Federal funding agencies, and foundations to identify additional sources of funds to support distribution and dissemination of the information obtained. The research element of this work unit includes evaluation of the effectiveness of saturated presentation techniques versus standard public service showing, measurement of the effectiveness of the TV messages, assessment of modification of behavior, and analysis of ethnic and SES differences as related to the effectiveness of the TV spots.

4. A series of videotapes illustrating adult-child behavior samples. Multimedia facilities in the Laboratory's building permits use of the latest television techniques. Discussion guides to be used in conjunction with the videotapes present optional responses that can be made appropriate to the various situations. These materials are being designed and tested for use in a group setting that includes parents and other carepersons. The research design examines order of presentation, quality of presentation (exemplary or "perfect" and flawed or "good") film versus videotape presentation, variable SES groups, and variable education levels.

5. Instructional packages, including sequences of learning activities, for paraprofessional teachers and parents of low-income children. These modules are designed to be used by trainers of paraprofessional teachers of low-income children and leaders of low-income parent groups. These packages rely on media rather than on the written word and encourage group participation. The research element of this

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work unit includes formative and summative evaluations of every piece of media, each activity, and all procedures.

Conclusion

As a result of this context analysis study three work units were funded by the National Institute of Education: 1) Parenting Materials Information Center Model; 2) Multimedia Training Packages for Parents and Paraprofessionals; 3) Television Spots on Child-Rearing Principles. Each of these work units addresses a need that has been identified by a constituency of recognized experts in the field of early childhood education. Their design permits timeliness of product availability by enabling individual products to complete the developmental cycle in a 12- to 18-month time period. In this way, the materials can be readied for dissemination to meet current needs. The scope of the development effort is congruent with the expertise of SEDL's Early Childhood staff members, and is a logical and progressive outgrowth of their completion of the Bilingual Early Childhood Program.

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FUNDED WORK UNITS:

Parenting Materials Information Center Model

Multimedia Training Packages for Parents and Paraprofessionals

Television Spots on Child-Rearing Principles

PARENTING MATERIALS INFORMATION CENTER MODEL

A large amount of materials and program ideas developed for use by parents of young children and for use in parent and paraprofessional training programs now exist. These materials, however, are scattered and for the most part are known and used primarily at the local level; often their use is confined to the originators at a given community site or school district. Thus, these careperson materials are largely inaccessible for other users. As parent and paraprofessional training programs increase, it has become crucial to make this information accessible, in order to decrease duplication of effort and to increase the efficiency of such training programs.

Solution Strategy

SEDL's proposed solution strategy, funded by NIE, was to design, develop, and research the effectiveness of a Parenting Materials Information Center (PMIC) Model as: 1) a method for disseminating information about the materials dealing with parenting skills and concerns and 2) a model for establishing similar centers around the nation.

Justification

Although a method comparable to the ERIC system could be used to inform adults who work with children about materials and program ideas, this type of system has been most effective for researchers or for those who have time to analyze and synthesize a variety of research reports, than it has been for parents and paraprofessionals.

The alternate solution strategy proposed by SEDL was to develop and research a model which provides the following information to personnel from local communities, school districts, and early education programs:

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1) Information about materials and programs

2) An analysis of these materials

3) An opportunity to examine the materials at the Center

4) A design for establishing similar cost-effective Parenting Centers in other locations

5) A guide for effective dissemination strategies for information about currently available materials.

The PMIC Model is in the process of identifying, collecting, cataloguing, and annotating materials for use in training adults who interact with children. Concurrently, criteria for analyzing parenting materials is being developed, instruments are being designed and refined, and materials are being analyzed. Alternative dissemination strategies are being developed, along with a design for researching their effectiveness. Finally, a manual is being prepared which will document the components necessary for replication of the Parenting Center in other locations.

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MULTIMEDIA TRAINING PACKAGES FOR PARENTS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS

Materials currently available for training parents of young children and paraprofessional preschool teachers tend to be heavily oriented toward middle-class users, and heavily dependent upon the printed word. Few, if any of the materials are organized in modular form so that they can be presented independently; few are in a multimedia format which requires minimal reading skills; and even less are available in Spanish so that native Spanish-speakers can use them with ease.

There is a need for coordinated sets of materials, or packages, which utilize a variety of media in order to maximize the communication of basic knowledge and child care skills for low-income parents and paraprofessional teachers of low-income children.

Solution Strategy

SEDL's proposed solution strategy, funded by NIE, was to develop and research the effectiveness of multimedia training packages designed: 1) to be used by leaders of low-income parent groups, and by trainers of paraprofessional teachers of low-income children, 2) to increase child care knowledge and skills in parents and paraprofessionals, and 3) to be presented in either Spanish or English.

Justification

While using self-paced instructional modules is a possible alternative for training parents and paraprofessionals in child care, data on teacher training approaches show that independent learning without benefit of feedback from peers or supervisors does not work well when complex behaviors, such as

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those required by child care, are involved (Fuller and Baker, 1970). Even with economically advantaged and well-educated trainees, the opportunity to view one's own teaching behavior on videotape usually is not sufficient to induce recognition of deficiencies and to change behavior, since the viewer tends to be "blind" to such deficiencies unless they are pointed out to him by someone else (Fuller and Baker, 1970). Thus, although it seems clear that there is a need for modular multimedia materials for training parents and paraprofessionals, it also appears that such products should be prepared for use by a leader or program coordinator working with the parent or paraprofessional.

SEDL is developing two sets of training packages: one for use by leaders of parent groups, the other by trainers of paraprofessionals. There are three topics per set: each topic is represented by an English version package and a Spanish version package, for a total of twelve packages. Each of the package topics addresses a major area of competency, and the modular products focus on individual skills related to the terminal goals. The skills have been selected from among those which research data and/or a consensus of opinion among early education practitioners and members of the target population indicated were fundamental or vitally important for fulfilling child-rearing tasks. Package titles for parents are: Living and Learning in the Home, Developing Independence and Responsibility, and Discipline for the Young Child. Package titles for paraprofessionals are: Setting the Scene for Good Classroom Behavior, Helping Children Learn, and Talking with Young Children.

Rather than focusing on demonstrations of specific curriculum ideas or activities, the packages focus on processes which can be generally used across a variety of situations in working with children. The packages contain

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from five to seven sessions. Leaders of the packages receive a leader's manual, a content outline, and the session procedures with accompanying media. The media used by the training packages include: filmstrips, videotapes or films, slides, transparencies, audiotapes, brochures, role-playing cards, game cards. These media are designed to present the basic information of the package, especially the more complex aspects of the processes involved which are relatively easy to show but difficult to explain verbally. Learning is usually easier and more efficient when a concrete example of the behavior being taught is presented to the learner, than when this behavior is verbally described to him but not concretely demonstrated (Blank, 1973). For this reason videotape is especially valuable as a teaching device. In addition to these videotape products, each package contains a limited number of printed materials, mostly pamphlets, which review the material or provide the participant with overviews. Teaching strategies, such as simulation and role-play activities, a variety of discussion guides and outlines, and/or practice exercises are also used. Only limited reliance is placed on reading skills. Reading is used as a method of reinforcement or review of information, rather than as a primary avenue of learning.

Evaluation instruments are included in each package. They measure the effectiveness of the total package as well as the individual sessions. Evaluations of session effectiveness measure mastery of the concepts for each session. The pre- and post-tests are designed to measure the initial knowledge level of the participants and the knowledge they gained from the sessions. The formative evaluations provide feedback to alter content and processes, and guide decision-making in the product development.

Research data is indicating the effectiveness of this training methodology for groups of Spanish-speaking parents, English-speaking parents, Spanish-speaking paraprofessionals, and English-speaking paraprofessionals.

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TELEVISION SPOTS ON CHILD-REARING PRINCIPLES

The majority of adults who care for children, regardless of their socio-economic level, do not enroll in formal parenting programs because of the demands upon their time made by work and leisure activity. Low-income adults face even more acute demands to provide for basic family necessities. In addition, literacy levels, the access to, and the cost of printed information about parenting or child rearing are prohibiting factors for this group.

There thus remains a need for the mass audience of adults to have easy access to information which will make them aware of the positive influences adults can have on children, as well as give them information about ready sources of materials appropriate to their specific needs.

Solution Strategy

SEDL's proposed solution strategy was 1) to design, produce, and research the effectiveness of a set of 30- and 60-second public service television spots which provide information on specific child-rearing practices and 2) to develop related print materials which reinforce and elaborate that information.

Justification

Although much parenting education could be accomplished through educational television programs, such programming is viewed by only a small fraction of the potential audience. The majority of television viewers choose instead to watch the highly-rated network shows. Radio is another possibility as an educational medium, but its potential is limited because audio is the sole channel in a radio message.

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Because commercial television is the communication medium most widely used for entertainment during both day and evening hours, SEDL is 1) producing a series of 30- and 60-second spots which concentrate on developing awareness of child-rearing principles in low-income parents, and 2) researching the effectiveness of these spots as a communication mode for presenting child-rearing principles to the target group, 3) preparing pamphlets which elaborate on the principles communicated by the spots.

Ordinary commercial spots are clearly successful in creating awareness and diffusing knowledge about new products, and many have been demonstrably successful in motivating people to switch to the new product or at least to try it. Communication of parenting information and skills through print media or verbal description is often time-consuming and difficult; the same material can sometimes be shown quickly and easily in a videotaped demonstration. Many aspects of parenting are adaptable to television spots as short as 30-seconds, if each spot is restricted to a single main idea to be illustrated visually, and is simultaneously described or discussed in the audio portion.

Altogether some twelve topics were selected by early childhood consultants and target audience advisory groups. They include: talking with children, reading to children, and expecting the best from children.

Communication research is comparing the effectiveness of different presentation modes for the parenting messages: television spots alone and in combination with other mass media, public service television and mixed media campaigns as compared with paid television and mixed media campaigns. Dissemination research will first focus on a small sample, broaden to several, separate markets in a five-state area, and finally be applied to other geographic regions.

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